



NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

October 11, 2002

Los Angeles INS District Director to Retire



LOS ANGELES — The head of the Los Angeles District Office of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) announced today that he plans to retire from government service effective December 1. Thomas J. Schiltgen has served as District Director of the agency's Los Angeles office since January of 1999. The Los Angeles INS District encompasses seven counties in Southern California and boasts one of the nation's largest immigrant populations.

"The last four years have been the most challenging and rewarding of my government career," District Director Schiltgen said.

"Thanks to the dedication of our employees, we made significant strides to improve customer service and build new relationships with the community. I am equally proud of our accomplishments in the enforcement arena and proud to have been a part of the INS team."

Under Schiltgen's leadership, the District achieved a dramatic reduction in the backlog of pending applications for naturalization and adjustment of status. Today, routine citizenship cases in Los Angeles are being processed in six to eight months, compared to an average of 24 months when Schiltgen first arrived. As District Director, Schiltgen also oversaw the opening of expanded full service INS offices in Orange and San Bernardino Counties. And, early next year the District will welcome visitors to its downtown office with a new information room redesigned to provide heightened privacy, convenience, and service for customers.

"Tom's energy and vision have made him one of this agency's most valued leaders and he will be missed," said INS Commissioner James Ziglar. "But the goodwill and changes he helped foster will leave a positive and lasting mark."

Schiltgen's tenure as INS Los Angeles District Director caps a 27-year career with the agency. After graduating from the University of Minnesota, he joined INS in 1975 as a Criminal Investigator in Chicago. Over the years, the Minnesota native moved up in the INS ranks holding a wide range of positions, including serving overseas as the Deputy Director of the agency's District Office in Bangkok. Prior to coming to Los Angeles, Schiltgen spent four years as Director of the INS San Francisco District.

Upon retiring, Schiltgen intends to take several weeks off to be with his family before pursuing consulting opportunities in the private sector. He also plans to devote more time to volunteer work. The INS will name an Acting District Director to oversee the agency's Los Angeles area operations until a permanent replacement is chosen.

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